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ORIENTATION PAPER FOR THE UNDP FIFTH INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR AFRICA (1992-1996)

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR AFRICA
DIVISION FOR THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME

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I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1. The Fifth Intercountry Programme is being prepared against the backdrop of unprecedented regional economic crisis and formidable international challenges, and in the face of severe financial constraints. The allocation for the Intercountry Programme for Africa has been substantially reduced from $226.1 million for the Fourth Cycle to $181.4 million for the next cycle. This figure will be further reduced by the amount of ongoing projects that will continue into the Fifth Cycle, thus limiting the resources available for new initiatives.

2. The 1980s was in many ways a depressing decade for Africa. The growth rate of real GDP for Sub-Saharan Africa was 1.0 per cent for the period 1980 to 1989. This compares with rates of 4.3 per cent for all developing countries and 3.0 per cent for developed countries over the same period. Real per capita incomes declined yearly at an average rate of 2.2 per cent for 1980-1989. This weakness is also reflected in sectoral performance. For instance, agriculture grew by an average of 1.8 per cent for the period 1980 to 1988. The structure of agricultural production has not improved significantly over the last 25 years. In 1988, agriculture's contribution to GDP was about one-third down from over 40 per cent in 1965. The poor agricultural performance coupled with rapid population growth has meant greatly increased dependence on imports and widespread hunger as purchasing power remained very low. Exports declined yearly at 0.7 per cent between 1980 and 1988 compared to annual increases of 6.6 per cent from 1965 to 1980. Sub-Saharan Africa's share of total world exports has fallen from 2.4 per cent in 1970 to 1.7 per cent in 1985. Even more dramatically, its share in non-oil primary exports declined from 7 per cent to under 4 per cent. Its contribution to manufacturing trade remains negligible. In the face of poor economic performance and the collapse of primary commodity prices, the stock of external debt has risen astronomically from $82.7 billion in 1984 (46.7 per cent of GNP) to $139.5 billion in 1988 (98.8 per cent). The seriousness of the situation is demonstrated by the increase of the number of LDCs from 21 in 1981 to 29 currently. Within the LDCs themselves life has become increasingly precarious with rising indebtedness and deteriorating terms of trade.

3. Over the last ten years, approaches to Africa's development have been articulated through such initiatives as the Lagos Plan of Action, the Final Act of Lagos, APPER, and UN-PAAERD. Furthermore, the Khartoum Declaration on human resource development, the Abuja Declaration on the role of women, the Arusha Charter on popular participation and the Kampala Declaration on sustainable development have further highlighted areas of particular urgency. Examining the economic crisis of the 1980s the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation adopted by African Heads of State and welcomed by the UN General Assembly stressed the need to locate short-term adjustment programmes in the context of long-term transformation. The basic theme which emerges from these initiatives is that of self-reliant and self-sustaining development which fully utilizes the human and material potential of the continent.

4. The context of African development in the 90s is likely to remain bleak. Prospects for primary commodity exports are not particularly bright and the trend toward regional integration in Europe may raise further barriers to African exports. The opening up of the Eastern European economies may mean sharp decreases in capital flows to Africa as these countries compete for funds in the international market. The current Middle East situation will also carry direct negative consequences for African oil importers. Indirectly also, an extended crisis in the Middle East may generate recessionary pressures in the industrial economies which will reduce capital flows.

5. While the general economic picture appears bleak Africa has continued to demonstrate resilience and dynamism. There is some evidence that a new generation of modern African entrepreneurs has emerged which is capable of transforming the informal sector into vibrant small and medium scale enterprises.

6. Moreover, African countries have come under great pressure from their people to democratise the political process. This encouraging trend augurs well for the future as a way of ensuring accountability in the process of governance. It also highlights the emerging importance of popular participation as a crucial ingredient in the development process.

7. The constraints and challenges confronting Africa in the 90s underline the urgency of structural transformation and diversification of African economic structures. It also underlines the imperative of strengthening the management capacities and of developing a realistic agenda for development over a long-term perspective as well as enhanced ability to negotiate a framework of external assistance which does not disrupt long-term planning.

II. LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE FOURTH CYCLE

Background

8. The Fourth Regional Programme for Africa represented the beginning of a new approach and conceptualization of UNDP technical co-operation in Africa at the regional level. The new orientation applied to both the consultation process in developing and designing the programme and the content and direction of the programme itself.

9. Guided by the various development strategies of the continent and recognizing the serious structural problems which have adversely affected the productive capacities of the Sub-Saharan economies, the Programme was designed to promote major structural changes and contribute to improved levels of productivity and the long-term development of the region. The most important feature of the Regional Programme was the promotion of regional economic co-operation and integration. This was based on a recognition that the dynamics of development need to be based on the collective resources and potentials of the region as a whole. The promotion of regional economic co-operation and integration was pursued through support to African Inter-Governmental Organizations. In addition, intercountry projects were designed to take advantage of complementarity, economies of scale, networking and sharing of experiences. The approach for the regional programme aimed at:

(a) Shifting assistance from general assistance for institution building to programme assistance with particular emphasis on specific areas within the areas of concentration; and

(b) Focusing the assistance, within the specific areas, on the intended beneficiaries, i.e. the target group.

10. The programme identified four areas of concentration:

(a) Research and Development for Food Production;

(b) Productivity and Management for production of Goods and Services;

(c) Natural resources (water, drought, desertification and energy); and

(d) Infrastructure (transport and communications).

It also identified: (a) Health; (b) International trade; and (c) Cultural and social dimensions as complementary fields of intervention.

In addition, special allocations were made for:

(a) Subregional organizations for economic integration and river/lake basin development organizations;

(b) Women-in-development (WID) concerns;

(c) Drought and desertification; and

(d) The UN Transport and Communications Decade for Africa (UNTACDA).

11. During the Fourth Cycle, the regional programme has provided support to a number of initiatives in these areas of concentration. In agriculture, assistance was provided for plant protection and biological control of food crop pests. Assistance was also provided for the selection of fertilizers for the principal food crops in various agro-ecological zones in tropical Africa. In an effort to boost animal and fish production, support was provided through a number of projects such as the Veterinary vaccine Production and Quality Control and Inland Fisheries and Planning/Management.

12. The programme has also provided valuable support to the UN Transport and Communications decade in Africa. Specifically, the regional programme has financed the co-ordination of the Decade's activities and financed specific pre-investment and technical assistance projects. These include strengthening capabilities for management, utilization and maintenance of existing infrastructures, improving intra-African transport and communications links, developing and improving transit-transport and support services.

13. The Fourth Cycle Regional Programme earmarked $25 million for subregional organizations for economic integration and river/lake basin development. While assistance in previous cycles consisted mainly of general assistance to broad secretariat activities, the Fourth Cycle programme concentrated on achieving more specific objectives, such as increasing production in the agriculture, industry and energy sectors. The rationale behind this approach was that in supporting activities in areas of obvious relevance, entailing direct benefits to participating countries, the credibility of the subregional institutions should be enhanced, thereby eliciting support for the secretariats.

14. The WID programme was based not merely on equity considerations but also on efficiency considerations. The approach was two-fold: The first was to advocate for the systematic integration of WID programmes in such areas as agriculture and human resources development; and the second was the formulation of a package of seven multi-disciplinary projects to increase the productivity and efficiency of women in key development sectors where they are the dominant participants or primary beneficiaries.

15. The Fourth Cycle Regional Programme has also been active in promoting the role of the private sector in economic development. Five subregional and over 100 national consultations were organized in which public officials and private individuals were brought together to exchange views on how to improve the environment within which the private sector may contribute to national and regional development efforts as well as on opportunities for privatisation. Several positive developments have resulted from these meetings.

16. Assistance to medium size businesses in preparing well documented bankable projects has been provided through the African Project Development Facility (APDF). Support for improving the management capabilities of African entrepreneurs has been provided through the African Management Training Services (AMTS). Recognizing the critical problem of capital, UNDP has conducted a major study on the creation of a Venture Capital Fund in Africa.

17. One of the important initiatives during this cycle was the attempt to address the social dimensions of structural adjustment. The regional project covering 32 countries sought to enhance the capacity of the governments of participating countries to incorporate the social dimension explicitly into the design of economic policy and development programmes. Specifically the project sought to enhance the government's capacity to develop and maintain adequate data bases on social aspects of adjustment; analyse the impact of adjustment on the socio-economic conditions of the population; formulate social action programmes aimed at the immediate compensation for the adverse effects of structural adjustment on the most vulnerable groups; and design and implement adjustment programmes which take better account of the needs of the poor and vulnerable.

18. The Fourth Intercountry Programme has undergone continuous review. The Mid-Term review was conducted from April to December 1989. A thematic evaluation of the Science and Technology component of the programme was carried out during the last quarter of 1990. In addition 24 tripartite reviews, 9 steering committees meetings, and 23 individual project evaluations were conducted during 1990. A special assessment of the assistance to Intergovernmental organizations was also done at the same time. Finally the in-dept evaluation of the programme has just been completed. Important lessons for the Fifth Cycle may be drawn from these evaluations.

A. Programme Design

19. The design of an intercountry programme on the basis of a five year cycle has been unrealistic, particularly with respect to institution development activities. The evaluation of UNDP's assistance to IGOs points out that support for institution building had just begun to bear fruit when emphasis shifted away from it during the fourth cycle. UNDP's support should be based on a longer term perspective (10-15 years) thus allowing the subregional and regional organizations with whom it works the opportunity to plan their technical assistance needs accordingly. This observation has been confirmed by the Fourth Cycle evaluation mission.

20. Despite the attempt to have thematic coherence, the various activities of the Fourth Cycle Intercountry Programme did not correspond to a programme but were interventions (projects) that were not operationally linked. The Fifth Intercountry Programme's focus should be carefully and clearly defined and the programme should be coherent. It is also necessary to make a deliberate effort to ensure that the activities of the intercountry programme and activities at the national and global levels are mutually reinforcing, and that the roles of subregional and regional institutions are clearly defined to ensure complementarity.

B. Project Formulation and Implementation

21. Project proposals for the intercountry programme originate from a number of sources, i.e. agencies, IGOs, governments, NGOs, UNDP itself. UNDP has to make sure that the project proposals adequately reflect the need or the interest of beneficiary governments. Even in instances where projects are specifically endorsed by governments, the general approval of a regional project has not always meant that the governments were ready to use the intended outputs of the project nor has it ensured the governments' financial commitment to project activities. It is, therefore, necessary to establish clear procedures for the participation of governments at the projects' formulation, design and implementation stage.

22. Both the in-depth evaluation and the IGO evaluation have observed that the co-ordination mechanisms for project formulation and implementation have not worked well. Extensive delays were experienced in project preparation and implementation, particularly for multi-sectoral ones involving several agencies. Even after projects have been approved, it has taken a long time to negotiate inter-agency agreements. The evaluation mission observed that had the IGOs themselves been allowed to implement their own projects, the time for project formulation and starting of activities could have been considerably shortened.

C. Monitoring and Management of the Programme by UNDP/RBA/DRP

23. The tendency for the Regional Programme to support an excessively large number of projects (over 350) has not only spread resources too thinly but also affected the extent to which the projects can be effectively monitored, bottlenecks identified and corrected.

24. UNDP Resident Representatives have not been able to play a sufficiently active role in regional programme activities. This is due to several reasons, one being that they are called upon to focus their attention much more frequently on national than on regional matters. Another reason is the insufficient exchange of information between headquarters and the field offices on regional projects. The appointment in 1990 of the Regional Programme Officers in Abidjan, Libreville and Lusaka has improved the monitoring of projects at the field level. The UNDP Representation to OAU and Liaison Office with ECA in Addis Ababa also continues to play an active role in monitoring regional projects.

D. Impact of the Programme

25. The Fourth Cycle Intercountry Programme succeeded in allocating the intended amount for the priority areas. An assessment of the impact of the programme on institutional development suggests that it has helped the concerned institutions in the performance of their operations. However, such support has not always been able to guarantee sustainability after assistance is withdrawn. Determining the impact of the entire programme is complex. While the targets of most individual projects were explicit and have produced desired results, the impact of the programme depends on their interactive effects which require a full scale assessment. The full impact of institutional development support, for instance, would comprise the effect on the institution's operations, the contribution towards sustainability of the project objectives and the contribution to the institution's impact on its own target group. Other types of support such as direct support, pilot projects, training projects also have these various aspects.

III. PROGRAMMING OF THE FIFTH CYCLE

The Basis of the Programme: Africa's Priorities

26. At its 37th session in May-June 1990 the Governing Council reaffirmed the exclusive responsibility of the governments of recipient countries for formulating national development plans, priorities and objectives. It emphasized the need to integrate into these the operational activities of the United Nations system. In the context of regional programmes, objectives and priorities should derive from the common goals and aspirations of the relevant region. Thus the strategic response described earlier continues to be relevant.

27. At the Governing Council Session referred to above, the decision was taken to focus UNDP Fifth Cycle Programme on building and strengthening national capacity in the following areas:

(a) Poverty eradication and grassroots participation in development;

(b) Environmental problems and natural resource management;

(c) Management development;

(d) Technical co-operation among developing countries;

(e) Technology for development; and

(f) Women in development.

28. This set of priorities is in line with the major concerns of the continent as reflected in the various documents setting out Africa's own perception and response to its economic and social crisis. The relevance of the Regional Programme and indeed of UNDP in Sub-Saharan Africa depends, however, on the extent to which it directly addresses in its actual operations the priority areas articulated by the governments of the region.

29. Considering the poor state and isolated nature of their infrastructures, the limited size of markets and the great diversity of currency and tax systems and customs procedures, the Orientation Paper for the Fourth Cycle had stressed the need for African countries to create markets that transcend political boundaries and are large enough to support viable regional and internationally competitive activities. It emphasized their need to increase the capacity to absorb and adapt technology, create viable transport networks, pool manpower and financial resources and promote the exploitation of complementarities. These observations highlighting the fundamental need for enhanced economic co-operation and integration remain valid for the 1990s. The fact that out of the 46 Sub-Saharan states, 24 have populations of 5 million or less and several of them are landlocked, indicates that for a large number of African countries regional co-operation is an absolute necessity.

30. Another critical theme in all assessments of Africa's development challenge for the 1990s is clearly the requirement for improved management and institutional capacities. Development planning, in particular, did not receive due attention in the 1980s, as countries became increasingly preoccupied with short-term stabilization programmes. Correspondingly, the locus of economic

management shifted from planning ministries to finance ministries and central banks. There is now, however, an emerging consensus that each African country must establish a framework for reconciling short-term management with long-term development objectives.

Priority Programme Areas

31. Given the limited resources available for the regional programme under the Fifth Cycle, it is imperative that it be sharply focused. Accordingly, three main themes have been identified to form the basis of the programme. The first theme will be support for regional integration. The regional programme will support activities related in particular to:

(a) The rationalization, harmonization and strengthening of existing subregional IGOs;

(b) The establishment of the African Economic Community; and

(c) Key sectors with intrinsic integrative characteristics. The most important of such sectoral activities may be highlighted.

32. Transport and Communications: A key component of an enabling environment is good infrastructure. Transport and communications facilities are particularly poor in Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet, they constitute a prerequisite for regional integration and co-operation. The regional programme is already participating in the preparation of the Second Transport and Communication Decade for Africa. It is expected that this support will continue through the Fifth Cycle.

33. Food Security/Food Self-Sufficiency: Food self-sufficiency is a prerequisite for self-reliant development. The regional programme would support activities, such as research, production, storage and marketing, which promote collaboration among several countries.

34. Industrial Development: The programme for the Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA) emphasizes the promotion of subregional/regional enterprises, institutions and support services that would increase Africa's industrial capacity. The regional programme would continue to support the formulation and implementation of a regional industrial co-operation programme.

35. Science and Technology: Strengthening indigenous technological capabilities is clearly another condition for self-reliance. Accordingly, the regional programme would remain supportive of programmes for harmonizing technology policies and strengthening collaborative efforts in research, development and commercialization.

36. Trade and Finance: Sub-Saharan African countries require assistance in the formulation and implementation of trade and financial policies. At the regional level, emphasis would be on fostering intra-African trade and on harmonizing fiscal, monetary and trade policies.

37. The second theme for the Fifth Cycle would be that of long-term strategic planning for socio-economic transformation. The concern under this theme would be to strengthen the macro economic, natural resource and environmental management capacities of African governments. The 1989 Addis Ababa Conference of African Ministers of Planning had requested UNDP to provide assistance in co-ordinating efforts to revitalize long-term economic and social planning in Africa. UNDP had responded by organizing a series of cluster meetings. The Regional Programme will

support national strategic planning with a focus on its subregional and regional aspects, such as support for advisory services, data collection and statistical development, and regional and subregional training and research projects for economic management and social services delivery. It will also continue to support collaborative efforts to address issues of poverty alleviation and employment. With regard to natural resources and the environment, the regional programme will continue its participation in the Global Environment Conference 1992 and the Global Environment Fund. It will also support co-operative activities for the management of soil, water, forestry and the preservation of biodiversity.

38. The third theme would relate to activities aimed at assisting the governments of the region in fostering an enabling environment for human development. The growing recognition that people come first and that democratizing the development process is a sine qua non for socio-economic transformation demands that the Regional Programme intensify efforts at releasing the creativity of people. Programmes to improve people's health and education would continue to be supported. Under the Fourth Cycle an innovative package had been initiated based on the mutual interests of NGOs, governments and UNDP. In addition, several private sector initiatives were launched. The Fifth Cycle will continue to play a key role in developing organizational forums, fostering dialogue and generating training opportunities towards the institutionalization of these collaborative efforts. Support for initiatives addressing the socio-economic impact of AIDS on development will also continue. Furthermore, the initiatives that have been taken during the Fourth Cycle to improve public management systems and enhance the role of the private sector in economic development will continue. Specifically, the regional programme during the Fifth Cycle will focus on management development in the public and the private sector, support to small-scale enterprises and the development of regional/subregional financial markets. The Fourth Cycle's attempts to systematically integrate women in development programmes will be markedly intensified.

Strategy for Articulating the Fifth Cycle Programme

39. A basic parameter for the Fifth Cycle is the more rigorous application of the programme approach. By this is meant:

(a) That the objectives of the Regional Programme's contribution to the priority areas must be clearly articulated and consistent;

(b) That the group of activities must be consistent with the set of objectives;

(c) That the activities themselves must be mutually reinforcing. The General Assembly Resolution 44/211 had highlighted the need for an integrated programme approach. More recently the Governing Council at its June 1990 session stressed the need for strengthening capacity and managing projects and programmes in an integrated manner to promote their long-term sustainability and their impact on development.

40. In applying the programme approach, the Regional Programme will seek to maximize its impact by paying more attention to the context in which its assistance will be provided. The programme approach will, at the design stage, emphasize a number of elements including the following:

(a) The policy framework within which the assistance is to be provided;

(b) The institutional arrangement (including the organizational structure and the systems within it and the functional relationship of the various organizational units);

(c) The financial resources available both from within the recipient institution and from other donors;

(d) The staffing and existing management and technical capacity of the institution;

(e) The link between the various institutions (between subregional and national and/or among national institutions of the different participating countries).

41. In each of the priority areas identified above, the Regional Programme's primary focus will be to respond to genuine regional concerns. The emphasis will be on those problems which lend themselves to regional/subregional solutions rather than national solutions. This would include activities that:

(a) Attempt to solve frontierless human or animal epidemiological problems common to a number of countries;

(b) Are geared to the rational management of certain common natural resources such as river/lake basins;

(c) Engender economies of scale in production or services such as regional industries, and research and development centres; and

(d) Expand intra-regional trade flows.

42. In addition, the regional programme would seek to strengthen linkages with national programmes thereby maximizing synergy. Previous evaluations have highlighted the importance of such linkages. The Regional Programme would strengthen its link with national activities through the greater involvement of Governments, NGOs, and Resident Representatives in the design and implementation of regional projects. As recommended by the Mid-Term Review of the Fourth Cycle Regional Programme, the views of UNDP Resident Representatives, the governments, IGOs and NGOs will be sought on regional programme priorities. The Resident Representatives would also be urged to identify specific instances where genuine linkages can be established between the Regional Programme and projects funded out of national IPFs. In addition, RBA/DRP would make available to the Resident Representative of a country a detailed account of ongoing and planned regional activities prior to the preparation of a new Country Programme. Furthermore, new regional programme proposals would be reviewed and appraised by the Project Appraisal Committee in the field office of the designated Project principal Representative (PPR) so as to ensure that the field office concerned is fully aware at an early stage of the scope and nature of new regional projects. Similarly the programme will strengthen its linkages with other regional programmes, particularly the Regional Programme for Arab States, and the Global and Interregional programme.

43. The Regional Programme would act, as much as possible, as a catalyst for the co-ordination and mobilization of other donor resources. As observed earlier, the Fifth Cycle is being launched in a period of shrinking resources for the regional programme. UNDP's unique position lies in its multilateral character and its knowledge of national priorities and concerns through its network of

field offices. It also has fairly easy access to the highest level of governments because of its political neutrality. It is, therefore well placed to mobilize donor support for well defined programmes. Tapping this potential is particularly urgent now in light of the emerging resource picture. In this respect, RBA will assist selected intergovernmental organizations to create the administrative capacity to identify needs for technical co-operation in the specific programme areas as well as help to create the capacity to administer, monitor and evaluate technical assistance. Similarly it will actively participate with UN agencies in raising trust funds for activities of common interest.

44. To enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the regional programme and maximize its impact, there will be concentration on fewer areas and projects. This is one of the most important lessons of our experience under the Fourth Cycle. In addition, recognizing that the solution of developmental problems does not necessarily correspond to the five year financial cycle of UNDP, the Fifth Cycle programme intends to adopt a longer term perspective than has been the case in the past. However, support beyond a cycle will depend on the continued relevance and effectiveness of the programme as established by rigorous evaluations.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

45. Currently the majority of projects are being executed by UN specialized agencies. However, it has been decided by the Governing Council to accelerate national execution. The concept of the national execution is admittedly difficult to operationalize in the regional programme context. However, under the Fifth Intercountry Programme for Africa this modality of execution will be pursued via selective encouragement of African intergovernmental organizations and institutions including Non-governmental Organizations to implement UNDP-funded programmes and projects. Indeed some national institutions could be charged with implementing certain regional activities. Under these arrangements, the decision concerning the level and mode of involvement of specialized agencies will belong to the participating governments, the organizations and institution concerned and UNDP.

46. However, this will be done after a careful assessment of the capacity of the organization and the institution to manage and co-ordinate technical assistance. The emphasis on the programme approach will considerably increase the need for more effective management and co-ordination of the various programme elements being provided by different donors and/or executed by different agencies.

47. During the Fifth Cycle, the Regional Programme for Africa will place strong emphasis on training in such a way that the required management skills are passed on to the recipient institutions, including NGOs and thus ensure sustainability. This would mean that the provision of counterpart personnel will be a stronger prerequisite than before in the provision of UNDP's assistance. However, the organizations themselves must be responsible for their core budget. In this way, the Regional Programme will concentrate on those institutions which show determined efforts to undertake and realize their objectives. The Regional Programme will encourage those institutions to become self-supporting in both management and financial resources.

48. The main problem in programme implementation is ensuring the cost-effective attainment of programme objectives as well as long-term sustainability. Sustainability depends not only on the institutions' ability to carry out their activities but also on the impact of these activities on the target groups. The Regional Programme will ensure this sustainability by:

(a) Actively involving the recipients/beneficiaries (governments/IGOs/NGOs) in the identification of needs and in the designing of programmes and projects; and

(b) Setting a time-table for the achievement of certain capacities after which assistance will be withdrawn. One way of ensuring the participation of governments in this process is the use of steering committees and task forces at the working level. The Regional Programme's experience during the Fourth Cycle with the use of steering committees as a tool for monitoring of project implementation has been largely positive.

49. Another approach to strengthening regional capacity will be through the active use of African expertise and the services of African institutions in the execution of UNDP supported projects. The Regional Programme recognizes the existence of underutilized human and institutional capabilities within the region. The socio-economic crisis of the last decade has taken a heavy toll on African universities but they still constitute a large pool of expertise. The growing number of unemployed university graduates further demonstrates the extent of Africa's unutilized potential. The problem is exacerbated by public sector budgetary constraints and lack of access to credit in the private sector. Within the framework of specific programmes/projects, the Regional Programme will encourage contracting the services of the various institutions in the region on a selective and competitive basis to carry out the necessary work and reduce the reliance of the region on external expertise. Similarly, it will encourage the acquisition of supplies and equipment within the region.

50. The regional programme will strive to intensify Technical Co-operation Among Developing Countries (TCDC) and in particular Technical Co-operation Among African Countries (TCAC). Executing agencies will be expected to actively orient their project development exercises in this direction. Furthermore, they will be expected to comply fully with the requirement to highlight areas of TCDC/TCAC potential in their submission of proposals for funding under the regional programme. Similarly the programme will encourage the use of UNVs in the implementation of UNDP supported activities. In addition to being cost-effective, the UNV's acquired experience in dealing with community level groups and Non-governmental Organizations will encourage popular participation.

51. During the current cycle the Regional programme has promoted networking as a mechanism for co-operation among national institutions working in the same field of activities. The idea of networks is to have national institutions contribute to the attainment of a common objective according to their comparative advantage. The typical network would consist of a lead institution which in turn relates to other institutions in the various countries. Although the limited experience with this mechanism during this cycle shows that the use of this approach in Africa is not without its difficulties, the Regional Programme will continue this effort selectively during the Fifth Cycle. It would do so by participating in initial needs assessment and planning of the networks' targets and assisting in the emergence of viable African-based lead agencies to serve as secretariats for networks.

V. THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

52. The Fourth Cycle Regional Programme was significant for the innovativeness and the breadth of the process of consultation that was adopted for its formulation. That process began with a series of discussions between ECA and UNDP/RBA which culminated in an Orientation Paper. The paper was endorsed by the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic Development and Planning and was widely distributed among executing agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. The substance and scope of these consultations helped to establish the relevance of the Programme. The Programme thus reflected the substance of major regionally-agreed policy documents on Africa's development objectives. Moreover, the consultation process engendered a feeling of identification on the part of intended beneficiaries and executing agencies.

53. Following the same tradition, this paper, prepared in consultation with ECA, was circulated to UN agencies, economic integration IGOs and selected NGOs and discussed at an Inter-Agency Meeting held in February 1991. It will be presented to the ECA Conference of Ministers in charge of economic development and planning in Addis Ababa in May 1991 for discussion and endorsement. Thereafter, the Fifth Cycle Intercountry Programme will be drafted, taking into consideration the outcome of the UN-PAAERD evaluation and the series of cluster meetings planned by RBA. It will then be presented to an Extraordinary Meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers in December 1991. The Programme will be finalised for approval by the Governing Council in June 1992.

VI. CONCLUSION

54. The relevance and effective impact of the Fifth Cycle Programme will depend largely on the extent to which it contributes to the successful implementation of Africa's development priorities. Moreover, given the limited resources, the impact of the programme will also depend on judicious design of projects within the accepted development strategies and goals, as well as their efficient implementation. The realization of these conditions for success will be the collective responsibility of African countries, UNDP and their development partners.